

## **Boldog Uj Evet! 2010 Happy New Year 2010**

Hideg van! It's cold!  
All across the USA, across  
Western Europe and into  
Eastern Europe, all the way to  
Asia . . . the weather is cold  
and snowy. Sometimes we  
look at the weather on our  
computers and see that you are  
even colder than we are.  
That's unusual! We imagine  
that even our friends and  
family across the south are  
building actual fires in your  
fireplaces and unearthing your  
long-lost winter clothing and snow boots. Aren't fireplaces, fleece, and heat wonderful blessings?



In spite of the cold, we hope you are still enjoying the aftermath of your holiday celebrations. Although Mary Patricia and Katie Beth have gone back to the USA, we are still wrapped in the warm and happy afterglow of their visit! We are celebrating the New Year with our souvenir from Salzburg--4 bunches of asparagus--and two new offerings from our T-Com cable TV: ESPN America and SkyNews. We can watch football (American) and college basketball while we eat our asparagus and Glen arranges music on his keyboard and computer!

Here at the Gandhi School, 2009 came to a close with lots of special Christmas celebrations and choir performances, in spite of the frigid weather.

### **Gandhi Choir**

During the last two weeks of school, the choir was delighted to be invited to perform three times, twice outside the school and once at the Gandhi Christmas program. The choir members loved performing their "new" selections for a gathering of Roma children at a neighborhood community center on a Tuesday afternoon.

The following afternoon, the Gandhi kids were amazed at the warm reception they received from an entirely NON-Roma group of older Hungarians at the community center. The crowd seemed to be genuinely impressed by the music they heard, by the talent in the group, and by the fact that an 18-year-old Roma student was translating for Glen (English to Hungarian). As they were leaving the performance, the Gandhi students marveled over the fact that the enthusiastic audience was completely non-Roma. They kept saying, "There were no Gypsies there! They liked us!" What a Christmas gift those folks gave to the Gandhi students!



The next week, the choir sang for a standing-room-only crowd at Gandhi's annual Christmas program. The solos were beautiful; the new songs were wonderful; and the finale of "Feliz Navidad"—complete with Santa Hats—was a hit! The student body and the faculty cheered and cheered. At the close of the concert, Glen gave every choir participant a Santa Hat that we bought and brought from America last summer.



This week, the choir began their preparations for their spring-break tour of Roma villages in southern Hungary. After the Christmas concert, several new students asked to join the choir, so Glen is beginning 2010 feeling very encouraged. In spite of the tense school situation, the choir is having its best year yet. This reminds us that God is working, even when we are feeling stymied by the conditions surrounding us!

As a last venture before we come to the end of our assignment here, Glen is also making preliminary plans to bring a small ensemble of singers and musicians to the USA this summer. Hopefully, they will be performing from Virginia to Texas and points all along the way and you will be able to meet and hear these remarkable young Roma (Gypsies).

#### Bible Club Christmas

What a delightful evening we had with the Bible Club on our last Monday evening before the Christmas holiday! In spite of schedule conflicts, we had a fairly large group who gathered to sing Christmas carols (in several languages), play some games, hear a

great Christmas lesson from Tamás Göbl, and eat LOTS of Christmas treats. In fact, we had to hurry the students out the door at curfew time.

### 12A Christmas Party

The 12A class—a “homeroom” class of 15 twelfth graders who have been together since the 7th-8th grade—is one of our favorite classes. One of the blessings of our work has been our “adoption” by this class as honorary members. These students and their lead teachers, Timi and Szaki, have included us in their class meetings, class trips, class parties, and hearts! We drew names in early December, and we spent two weeks writing poems and making gifts for our secret angels.

Glen and I drew Szaszi’s and Tomi’s names, so we wrote our poems, got Annamaria to translate them into Hungarian, and headed out for the party in the renovated choir room. The afternoon was really fun, especially since we understand a tiny bit of Hungarian (thank goodness, after 2 ½ years!). The high moment was when Klaudia Kalanyos, stood up and read a poem to her secret angel. She began in Hungarian, then re-read it in perfect English. The class was amazed and Glen and I were fighting tears. Klaudia, the unofficial choir leader, has never had an English lesson in her life and doesn’t speak English! However, because she wanted to do something special for Glen, she wrote a poem about him, got Laci Vofeny (our translator) to translate it, and practiced English pronunciation with Laci for almost two weeks so that she could read it perfectly. It was one of those moments Glen will never forget. (Neither will I!)



Since we have had the pleasure of knowing many of these students since our first mission team-trip here in 2005, it is going to be very difficult to say good-bye to them in the summer!

### Cooking Club Christmas

A Hungarian Christmas was our theme for our Wednesday night party at Timi Tihany’s apartment. (Timi is the teacher with whom I do the cooking club.) What a night to remember! The kids helped to cook stuffed pork and chicken which, although Hungarian, they had never eaten. It was both funny and sad to see them approach the Hungarian food with the same trepidation they’ve shown with the international foods! And they had the same reaction: delicious!

Nineteen of us were packed into her apartment like happy sardines. She had gone to the trouble to borrow tables and chairs, and she had beautiful Christmas paper products for the tables. So, the girls arranged the tables and the centerpieces, and we all had a lovely seated dinner when the cooking was complete!

For Christmas, Glen and I decided to share some of the precious chocolate chips that you sent to us. We used some of the Christmas cellophane bags sent by another group and made a “chocolate chip cookie” bag—with the recipe, some chocolate chips, and a wooden spoon. They loved the surprises. THANK YOU for the supplies!!! In fact, after we gave them the little gifts, the students asked us to sign their spoons. So all around the Roma villages, families are using wooden spoons with our signatures on them. Do you think someone will think we are famous chefs?

Although we tried to “play it down,” the evening ended on a little bit of a sad note when Timi told us that the new administration has decided that we can no longer have the cooking club. In spite of her offer to move it to the school and let them observe us, she was told that the cooking club was no longer approved. We have been pretty sad about it, but we have reminded ourselves that God will open another door somewhere.



### **Adkins' Christmas Celebration**

Our own celebration began after we attended the nice (but tense) Christmas Dinner for the teachers at Gandhi. We headed to Budapest to meet Katie Beth and Mary Patricia, our daughters, who flew in for the holidays. In spite of our car's collapse in Budapest and a long trek in the zero degree weather, we made it to Ferihegy

Airport just in time to meet Katie Beth and the 3 giant duffels she hauled to Hungary. [She was carrying about 10 items for herself and 120 lbs. of things for the Gandhi kids!] As usual, we cried all over her when she landed; then we repeated the scene when Mary P arrived two hours later. What a wonderful day for us!

The four of us walked everywhere, arm-in-arm, for the next 7 days! We strolled the Christmas Market in Budapest, drank hot drinks in the snow, and ate beside the icy Danube. Then, we braved the frigid temperatures of the Kellesti Train station, pushed and shoved the 5 duffels and assorted carry-ons onto the packed train, and rode down to Pecs. Our girls are great sports, so they enthusiastically accompanied us to dinner at Timi and Zoli's flat, rode the bus to Komló—a little town near Pecs—to eat dinner with Dori and Eva Radnai, hiked in their nice shoes to the two-hour Christmas night service at the Baptista Templom (in Hungarian), and joined the Göbl family for a Christmas night dinner and singing in their home. The Göbl family loved “Christ Child Lullaby” when Glen and the girls sang for them!

We hated to see KB leave on the 27<sup>th</sup> and MP leave on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Now we are looking towards May when we will all meet in New Haven for Mary Patricia's law school graduation.

### Gifts for Gandhi ... from Texas

Christmas continued into January for the Gandhi students. Thanks to my sister, Mary Evelyn, and the Cooper and Scully Law Firm in Dallas, TX., every single student and all of the homeroom teachers received special gifts! Two of Katie Beth's duffels from the USA held large white envelopes—individually addressed—for each student and his/her head teacher. Each hand-decorated envelope was packed with a Christmas card, package of hot chocolate, a candy cane, and a pair of gloves! I still have a hard time imagining that our friends at Cooper and Scully were able to get all of those things in one envelope and that they gave the hours and hours that it must have required to pack those envelopes so carefully! What a gift!

The result? The main hall at Gandhi was a madhouse when we handed out the gifts. We set up the duffel bags, along with some little books about the Good News of Jesus for teens (from Glen and me), and began the distribution at lunchtime. We have NEVER been rushed like we were that day. As soon as the kids realized that we were giving individualized envelopes, they filled the whole hall and a madhouse ensued! Thank goodness for two 11<sup>th</sup> graders—Balazs and Ildiko—who got behind the table with us and started matching each envelope with the right student. We didn't even have time to take pictures until the “finishing up” time.



The kids just LOVED the envelopes with their names on them and the gifts inside. You would have thought that we were giving \$100 to each one of them. They were blown away! One of my favorite students, Eszti, came to show me her card because

it had Scrooge and Tiny Tim on the front. She was so delighted to have a card with the “Christmas Carol” story. This kind of thing happened all afternoon.

The most amazing thing about the whole experience was that the students immediately ate the candy canes and put on their gloves, but then they carefully RESEALED the envelopes and carried them around the school or put them into their bookbags. When I asked a couple of students about this, they said that they were taking them home to show their families. You know, in many places (America?), the ground would have been littered with those addressed envelopes. Afterwards, when I was throwing away the trash, I noticed that NOT ONE envelope was in the area trashcans. The students kept every part of the gift!

After the madhouse . . .the teachable moment:

It still amazes me that God always provides teachable moments for both the students and for the Adkins! One of those moments occurred as we were beginning to wind down. I had noticed one of the younger boys hanging around the table, smiling at us and killing time. Because we are not in the classrooms this year, Glen and I don’t know most of the younger kids, so I didn’t know this boy. As most of the others drifted away, he grabbed one of the English students and asked him to translate. Although it took us awhile to decipher his questions, I finally understood that he was asking “WHY?” As the translating student put it, “Why you give us this things?”

Although we had all kinds of written explanations, Glen and I realized that this boy wanted us to tell him, in translated words, exactly why some Christians in America would send him a gift. Because of these white envelopes, we were able to tell this young teen about God’s love for him—for all Gypsies—and about God’s gift of love in Jesus. He was really interested and asked questions. When we were all exhausted (Communicating in two languages is very tiring for everyone!), he sat down on my chair and just stayed with us until we left. It was as if he didn’t want to leave the warmth and acceptance of God’s love that came through those envelopes all the way from Texas.

Even hoping for that result, I am still stunned when a simple gift in an envelope causes a life-changing moment in the life on one student!

. . . from Mississippi



Thanks to Becky Wooley and her knitting needles, several of the Gandhi girls got beautiful, warm scarves for Christmas. Becky came with the mission team from Northminster Baptist in Jackson, MS, last May and helped to lead an English camp for our younger students. Then, she evidently began working on scarves for some of the students. She did all of the work, and we had the pleasure of giving those scarves to a few girls who needed both their warmth and the love that went

into making them!

Yes! That is Laci Vofeny modeling a scarf!

Although we gave most of the scarves directly to the girls, two went to two very self-conscious orphans, who never have Christmas . . . period! We wrapped those scarves, added some candy and a small angel ornament on the top of the bow, and delivered them as tactfully as we could--by way of their head teacher. We never said anything; they never said anything. However, both have been wearing the scarves, and one has been to our last three Bible Club nights. THANK YOU, Becky Wooley!!!

. . . from Louisiana

A few girls—including one of our favorite students, Nelli—are also wearing “puffy” coats or vests thanks to my mother, Carolyn Huckabay, and sister, Tracie Woods, from Shreveport, LA. Katie Beth’s third duffel was stuffed with these insulated coats and vests for students at the school. With the help of Renáta, the school Social Worker, we identified other students who didn’t own actual coats—in spite of the frigid temperatures—and are discreetly (I hope) connecting some of them with coats or vests. Renáta is still in the process of distributing the coats. Meanwhile, it is wonderful to see students walking around, warmly wrapped in puffy neon! Thank you, Mom and Tracie!



Has Everything Been Done?????

Has everything been done for these Roma students? NO! NO! and again, NO! We share the wonderful moments with you to thank God, to thank you, and to encourage ourselves! These joyful moments and gifts are the visible



illustrations—the parables—about God’s love for Roma (Gypsies). These times and gifts are so important because they bring a tiny ray of hope, of joy, of lightness and pleasure, of love, into the hearts and lives of these beleaguered students and their families who hear mostly hate, hostility, and fear from the world around them. They still need you!

Please continue to pray. The joyful celebrations and the teachable moments happen because God uses your faith and your prayers to work in the Gandhi students’ lives. They need your prayers, and we need your prayers. Your prayers give us the focus and energy to keep this ministry going!!! Prayer is THE most important thing you can do or give. That is the absolute truth.

If you want to do something in addition—send something, help an individual student, or come to participate in person, we would love for you to be involved. Because of the administration change at Gandhi, funds that were once used to aid students and

their families are now being re-directed. (That is the most politically correct way that I can describe the situation!) Therefore, Glen and I spend part of every day trying to find educational opportunities and resources for students who are trying to achieve their goals at Gandhi. As we share the gospel with all of these students, we are trying to guide, to support, and to provide opportunities for the music students and the English students as they work towards better futures for themselves and their families.

The needs seem endless; the numbers are enormous; the fields are huge; and the time for us is short. Therefore, we are always blessed, thankful, and delighted to welcome your interest and participation!

We hope that 2010 is a memorable and blessed year for all of you!



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